STAT

## The Bookshelf

# The U-2 and the Noise When One Fell Down

Though they are obviously not privy to the innermost secrets of the CIA, the two Washington reporters who have collaborated on "The U-2 Affair" have wrapped up a lot of exciting information bearing on the ill-fated espionage flight of Francis Gary. Powers over the Soviet Union in the last days of the Eisenhower Administration.

The book as a whole, however, fails to jell, for the Messrs. David Wise and Thomas B. Ross do not seem to know how to extract meaning from the material they have so industriously assembled.

They are good when they are writing about the character of Powers, "an ordinary man sent out on an extraordinary mission." Powers flew his U-2 as a vocation, not as a dedication. He seems to have conducted himself with seemliness in his "vocational" circumstances.

Apparently he could not have destroyed his plane after it had been put out of commission by the near-miss of a Soviet missile over the Siberian town of Sverdlovsk, for he was halfway out of it before he realized what had happened. The force of gravity kept him from climbing back in to "actuate the destructor switches." Once in Soviet hands, there seemed to be little point in committing suicide, for his captors already had the telltale plane, with its paraphernalia of camera and photographic film.

#### Flash Back Technique

In exploring the character of Powers and that of his forebears and his wife Barbara, the authors use the flash back technique that was so brilliantly exploited by Charles A. Lindbergh in his book about the first New York-to-Paris transatlantic flight.

One minute we are being told that Powers carried with him a poisoned needle for possible use in taking his own life if he happened to be subjected to torture on capture. In the very next paragraph Oliver Powers, the pilot's father, is telling his boy, aged 18, that "It's a sin to kill yourself. The last act you do, if it's sinful, you go into discard." The implication is obvious: Powers was no man for establishing a Japanese Kamikaze tradition for American pilots engaged in espication fights.

The authors are also good when it comes to the chronological unfolding of the series of blunders made by the State Department and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in putting out "cover" stories on the failure of the Powers mission. Instead of sitting tight until Khrushchev had indicated just how much spy evidence he had in hand, the American authorities put out a palpable lie about a "weather flight." The lie could not be sustained.

The next step was to admit the interespionage without implicating Eisenhower. But the President crossed up his own "team" by insisting that he take responsibility for the U-2 flight before the world. He did not wish to be put in the position of being a more figurehead unaware of what was going on.

#### Impact on Summit

It is only when Wise and Ross begin to talk about the political significance of the U-2 affair that they bog down. They seem to think that U-2-type espionage, since it can hardly blanket a continental area, must lead to risky assumptions about the actual military strength of a stretched-out eremy. In the case of the Eisenhower Administration it "created overconfidence." It was, so the authors think, especially unfortunate on the eve of the summit, where an "atmosphere might have been created in which sime specific problems could have been resolved."

Aro the authors correct in these aspersions of the U-2 program? Isn't it this that the Eisenhower Administration, drawing on U-2-gathered facts, was more nearly correct than the crusading Kennedy of 1844 about the nature of the "missilelgap". Aid could a minmit meeting in 1980 have come anything?

After all, Khrushchev, according to the Wise-Ross evidence, had been well sware that U-2s were flying over Russia for many months before the capture of Powers how about the violations of the Soviet "all space" when he was hobnobbing with them hower at Camp David and inviting the U.S. President to visit the Soviet Union. If light chev's anger at Paris, when he broker is the summit meeting, was certainly a symmetric product.

J. Pierpont Morgan used to say that there were always two reasons for in the "good" reason and the real reasons for Powers flight could have been Khruphan "good" reason for wriggling out of a than the make any significant concessions to the West.

### Story of Success

As for the actual U-2 flights, the Wise and Ross do not seem to reach they have written the story of a great as cess. In 1954 and 1955 a Lockheed Airco. Corp. designer, Charence Loop "Ross managed to produce a reach grider plane that could cruise at 65 million well above the reach of flights."

With a firmness that does copecially in the light of Soviet aucoloses realing A-bomb secrets, the Maschewer ministration sanctioned the use of the Light of for an uninterrupted span of four Wice and Ross concede the "president we have had any valid diplomacy has information?"

The success of the U-2 filedity vincing Elsenhower that the waren't nine feet tall above in the first of the Berlin would exceed by the to the West long ago.

Powers flight had been how many, it advertised to that America could be both strong to the pure age of Communist imperialism. Talk about the importance of that areally a bad thing for the court of the

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